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LITTLE FREDDIE
FEEDING HIS SOUL.









LITTLE FREDDIE
FEEDING HIS SOUL.

BY
SAY PUTNAM.



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CHAPTER I.

PAPA'S PRAYER.

"DON'T call me yet, Susy; I must eat another buckwheat cake for my soul."

"Eat a cake for your soul! What do you mean, Freddie? Father wouldn't like to hear you say that."

"Oh, yes, he would! for I heard him pray this morning, that we might take food for our souls; and I know mine is hungry, for I never fed it before."

"O Freddie, you silly boy! don't you know better than that? I do."

"Why, what do you feed your soul with, Susy?"

"Oh! I give mine hymns and such things. Don't you know mamma says that's what does our souls good!"

"My soul don't like hymns, though. It likes buckwheat cakes, and candy, and such things," insisted Freddie.

"But they don't have cakes and candy in heaven," said Susy; "and mamma says that is the soul's home."

"Do you think they have hymns for breakfast in heaven?"

"Oh! stop, Freddie: that doesn't sound nice. I don't think they eat any thing in heaven. I am sure they don't have breakfast and dinner and supper. I never heard of such a thing. They sing and play on harps."

"Oh, yes!" said Freddie; "but what do you think papa feeds his soul with? I am going to ask him."

"Papa has gone to Sunday school.

Let's go and ask Ria; she is in the nursery."

Freddie pushed himself and his chair vigorously away from the table, and ran upstairs. Susy followed, singing, "I want to be an angel," by way of impressing Freddie that she was right.

Freddie rushed into the nursery, and asked in a very loud voice, "Ria, what do you feed your soul with, — candy or hymns?"

Ria was dressing the baby, and looked up in astonishment at Freddie's strange question.

"Why, I don't feed my soul at all," said she: "it takes care of itself; it doesn't need any food."

"Yes, it does," said Freddie: "I know it does; and if you don't feed it, it will die, just as Susy's canary bird did, because she forgot him. I know

the soul eats something, and I want to know what to give mine."

"Ria," said Susy, "don't you think he'd ought to give it hymns and verses in the Bible, and all the good things?"

"Oh, yes!" said Ria; "that's it: you must be a good boy and learn all the hymns and verses you can, and that will make your soul grow."

"Will it?" said Freddie, looking very much puzzled; "but I can't learn such things, I am such a little boy; and, besides, my soul don't like them. Susy's does. I wonder if mine wouldn't like pictures."

With this thought, he went to the lower drawer of the bureau, where his books and toys were put, and seated himself upon the floor to consider the matter.

Meanwhile, Susy, who thought her soul must be very much larger and

better than Freddie's, began to sing again, and amused herself by looking out of the window.

The first picture Freddie looked at was of a dog bringing a stick out of the water. He thought his soul liked this picture: and, while he was dreaming over it, he began to wonder if dogs had souls too; and, if so, what they lived on. He was sure they couldn't learn hymns and wouldn't like pictures.

The next picture had five little kittens in it. Here the question came again, and he concluded that the kitties couldn't have souls, because they could only play, and sleep, and lap a little milk.

The next picture made him think of a little white rabbit he had last summer, and which the dog killed: and then he wondered if rabbits went

to heaven; and, if they did, if they learned to sing hymns.

The next picture was of a squirrel, sitting in a tree, cracking a nut. This made him think about a walk he had with his uncle in the woods, and what a chase they had to catch a squirrel, which ran away into a high tree, and sat on one of the branches; curling up its soft bushy tail, and looking down at them very provokingly.

This made him forget for the time about feeding his soul; and he wished it was summer, and that he could go into the woods again, and find squirrels, cones, and acorns, and fill his pockets with them. Then he piled up some acorns he had in the drawer, and tried to hold one up and munch it like the squirrel. This amused him very much. While he was busy with his nut, Susy called out, "O

Freddie! there is Aunt Mary coming; I am going downstairs to meet her."

Freddie dropped his nut, and went down too,—rather slowly, though; for he did not stop his thinking about the woods and the squirrels.

Aunt Mary told them, that their father would not come home until evening, as he had gone to see a little boy who was very sick. So she had come to take dinner with them.

The children felt a little lonely, as their mother had gone away for a few days; and good Aunt Mary came up into the nursery, until dinner was ready. The baby was asleep; so she sat down by the window and took Freddie in her lap, and told them about the little boy, who was so sick that they thought he could not live many hours.

Freddie asked if he could eat any thing.

Aunt Mary said no, that he could only take a little drink from a spoon.

"Has he got any soul," asked Freddie.

"Oh, yes!"

"How does his soul live, if he can't sing hymns, or say verses, or see pictures; and can't eat anything?"

"Oh! his soul doesn't need to eat, in order to live; but his body needs to eat, in order to keep the soul in it."

"But papa prayed this morning that our souls might have food; and Susy says she feeds hers on hymns and verses: and I don't know what to give mine, because it don't like such things. I tried to find some pictures to give it, and I thought perhaps it would like a buckwheat cake; but Susy laughed at me for that."



Freddie.

AUNT MARY.

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Aunt Mary could not help laughing too; but she called Freddie a good little boy, for trying to feed his soul.

She then explained to him, that his body was the home of his soul, while it was in this world, and when the body died then the soul went to another home, which his heavenly Father had prepared for it; that while his body lived, it needed food to keep it alive, just as the dogs and cats and birds did. She told him that his soul needed food too; but that it was a very different kind from that which his body needed. She said that wisdom would feed his soul. Then she asked Susy to say one of her verses. Susy thought a moment, and then repeated, "I love them that love me."

"Yes," said Aunt Mary: "Jesus says that. Now, Freddie, can you think what that means?"

Freddie looked as if he was trying very hard to think.

"You know what it means when I say, *I love you?*"

"Oh, yes, ma'am!" said Freddie, looking very bright.

"And you understand when I say, *You love me?*"

"*Why, yes, ma'am.*"

"Now, do you understand this; *When you love me, then I love you?*"

"Oh, yes! it means that when I put my arms around your neck, then you will put your arms around mine."

"Not exactly. You love me, don't you, without putting your arms around my neck?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Freddie, smiling and looking up into his aunt's kind face, with his sweet blue eyes beaming with his soul's offering.

"You *feel* that I love you: don't

you?" and her eyes looked love back to his.

Freddie nodded his head two or three times, but did not speak.

"Now, if you should shut your eyes and not *see* me, can't you *feel* that you love me, and that I love you?"

The lids shut down over the sweet eyes, and the rosy face was still for a minute, with only a stray dimple here and there, showing the working of the soul within.

Then the dimples grew deeper, and Freddie burst into a merry laugh.

"O aunty! that is good: my soul loved so hard that it made me laugh."

"Then the thought, that you loved me, and that I loved you, did your soul good. It was fed. Now shut up your eyes, and think of Jesus in the same way."

"Oh! I don't know Jesus; I don't love him; I don't want to think about him."

"Oh! isn't he naughty, aunty," said Susy, "to talk so about Jesus?"

"Why, did you ever see Jesus, Susy?" asked Freddie.

"Oh, no! but then I know he's somebody that loves me, because the hymn says so; and it says too, that the Bible says so."

Just then the dinner-bell rang, and Freddie ran to the drawer after an acorn, to show his aunty that he could eat like a squirrel.

When Aunt Mary asked the blessing at the table, she said, "Bless this food to our bodies, and our souls too."

Freddie's wistful blue eyes were looking at her when she opened hers.

"Why aunty, there isn't any *I love*

you and me on this table: what made you pray that?"

"Oh, yes! there is. If our heavenly Father did not love you and me, he would not have given us this food for our bodies."

"Why, does he give me potatoes and such things?"

"Yes: he made the potatoes grow in the ground, and then he let some of them come here for you. And, besides, he makes you like them, so that they will do you good."

"There," said Susy, "don't you know I told you that Jesus loved us?"

"Oh! Jesus isn't heavenly Father," said Freddie.

"*Yes, he is,*" said Susy, very positively.

"He is only a baby," said Freddie.
"Ma showed me the picture of him

lying on a pillow, with a star upon his head."

"But he grew up after that," said Susy, "because he took little children in his arms, and said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me;' and then he went up to heaven after he had died, and I know he is up there now; and, if I should die, I should go right up there and see him."

"If you love God, your heavenly Father," said Aunt Mary, "it is just the same as loving Jesus, his Son; and if God loves you, then Jesus loves you. Jesus himself says, 'I and my Father are one.'"

"He came from heaven, Freddie, to be a little baby, and grow up, and die, and then go back again; and he did all that, because he loved us; and we shall know all about how much

he loved us just as soon as we begin to love him."

"I guess I will love him," said Freddie: "will he feed my soul?"

"Yes: if you ask him, he will give it all the food it wants. You know, when you say 'Our Father,' you pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread:' that means bread for the soul as well as the body."

After dinner, Aunt Mary sent up to have the baby brought down.

Sweet, rosy, fat, blue-eyed Lily! She had only lived a few months in this world of ours, and seemed to have a beam from heaven playing about her all the time.

Aunt Mary took her, and the children kissed her soft cheeks and dimpled arms and hands; and she patted back her love and curiosity, talking to them in a succession of soft goo-

goos, which were very entertaining. When Freddie clapped his hands, she would laugh, and try to spring up as if she was going to fly.

She had an ivory ring fastened by a white ribbon to her waist, and Susy held it up before her and let it swing gently, to see if she would catch it. Lily watched it in rather a dreamy way, holding up first one little hand and then the other, as it came near her.

"She is trying to understand it," said Aunt Mary: "her soul wants food."

"Why, has she got a soul too?" said Freddie, "such a little baby!"

"Yes: she is learning all the time from every thing around her, and her soul thinks after a baby fashion; and, when she is a little older, mamma will teach her to say 'Our Father,' just as she taught you and Susy."

"When do you think papa will come?" said Susy.

"I thought I heard his step in the hall a moment ago; perhaps he has gone upstairs to find us."

Susy started in search, and soon returned full of prattle, holding her father's hand.

"O father, how glad I am you have come!" said Freddie, dancing up and down, first on one foot and then on the other, and seizing the hand stretched out to him.

"I am glad to get home," said his father: "the day has seemed long."

"Come, Lily, pet, come to papa! let me have my hands, children, for her, and you may have my knees."

So saying, he took the springing, beaming Lily, and sat down for Susy and Freddie to climb on his knees.

"Three precious little immortals,"

said he, "with your rosy smiling faces! Ah, you Lily, rogue! you mean to have a handful of my whiskers: stop, my little lady."

"Here, Lily," said Susy, "take your ring."

"She is going to feed her soul on whiskers; it has had ring enough," said Freddie.

"O papa!" said Susy, "you don't know how funny Freddie has been talking all day, about giving his soul something to eat."

"Freddie don't mean to let his soul starve," said Aunt Mary; "and he is right."

"I only did what papa prayed," said Freddie, "about our souls having food. I thought if my soul was hungry, perhaps it would die if I didn't feed it, as Susy's canary bird did."

"My soul won't die," said Susy,

"because I know so many hymns and verses."

"I think I shall love Jesus," said Freddie, "for aunty says he will feed my soul."

"That's it, my boy," said his father. "I will tell you what made me pray that our souls might have food. I had been reading in the sixth chapter of John what Jesus said himself: 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'"

"When our heavenly Father made our bodies, he made souls to live in them; and they begin to think and try to understand, from the first. Lily, you see, is trying to get at

something new all the time. As we grow older, our souls want something besides what we see around us; and then we must go to Jesus for the Bread of Life, which cometh down from Heaven."

"Why, I thought we ought to learn hymns and verses," said Susy.

"That is one way to get the food; because, if they are in the mind, they will be already for use. But you must *use* them, or it will do no good to learn them. If I should go and buy a great many loaves of bread, so that we could have them when we were hungry, and they should be put away in the closet and never eaten, they would do no good."

"But we should eat them if we were really hungry," said Susy.

"Yes: we should attend to the wants of our bodies very quickly, be-

cause we have learned how, and we enjoy doing it. So, when our souls are hungry, we must know how to take the food from our store and give them, just as quickly and with just as much interest."

"Just as you tried to do, Susy," said Aunt Mary, "when I asked you to say one of your verses, and you had it ready, — 'I love them that love me.'"

"And I know another one," said Susy, quickly, — "'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'"

"Very well: feed your soul with that, when it is hungry," said her father.

"I like the other best," said Freddie: "it feels so good to love."

"Dear child," said his father, putting his arm around him, "'Love is the fulfilling the law,' and the longer

you love, the better you will understand that. Love on, my boy, and dear Jesus will teach you."

By this time, Lily was so restless that Ria came and took her upstairs; and Mr. Percy, after putting the children on the sofa, beside him, told them and Aunt Mary about the little boy he had been with that day, whose soul had now gone to its heavenly home.

"Won't it come back here?" said Freddie.

"No," said his father. "They will lay his body away in the ground: his soul will have no more use for that, as it has gone to another home."

"Where is that home?" asked Freddie.

"With Jesus in heaven, we hope," said his father. "He was one of the scholars in my class in the Sun-

day school; and, I think, he understood about the Saviour and loved him."

"This morning, his mother was holding him in her arms; his head was resting on a pillow, and he seemed to be asleep. While she sat looking at his pale, patient face, he opened his eyes, looked at her earnestly, and said gently, 'Sing "Jesus loves me."' She sang all the verses to him: can you repeat them, Susy?"

"Yes, sir, —

" 'Jesus loves me: this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong:
They are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus loves me, he who died,
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let his little child come in.

Jesus loves me, — loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high,
Comes to watch me where I lie.

Jesus loves me, he will stay
Close beside me all the way;
If I love him, when I die
He will take me home on high.' ”

“After she had sung it, she said to him, ‘Do you love Jesus?’ He nodded his head several times in assent, and whispered, ‘*Yes.*’ ‘Does he love you?’ she said, and he made the same reply. ‘Do you want to go to him?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied: ‘he is coming, and I will go.’ ”

“Did you ever think before, Susy, how much that hymn meant that you have just repeated? ”

“No, sir.”

“You see it was all his soul needed in his suffering and weakness. What a blessing it was to him to know it all as he did, and know how to feed his soul with it in the time of its greatest want! ”

“Will his soul get food in heaven? ” asked Freddie.

"Oh, yes! better there than it would here."

"Won't it grow fast! but I shouldn't like to go to heaven without you and mamma. I shall take care when I am walking, not to walk up on to the sky, because then I should die."

"If you love Jesus, he will teach you how to live, and die too; and you will not fear one any more than the other."

Tea was ready now, and after that the children were soon asleep.





CHAPTER II.

GOING FOR MAMMA.

THE next morning, Freddie opened his eyes when the sun was shining brightly, and looked up into the sky, from his little bed, and wondered how far off heaven was and how it looked.

While he was thinking about it, Ria came to dress him.

"Ria," said he, "how do you suppose heaven looks?"

"Dear me! what a queer boy you are! I don't know any thing about heaven. I suppose it is a pretty bright place, where we shall have every thing that we want."

"Oh dear, you don't know! I mean to ask Jesus; perhaps he will tell me somehow. I wish I knew where I could find Jesus."

This silenced Ria, for she couldn't help thinking that she ought to know more about such things, and while thinking wished that she, too, could know where to find Jesus.

Freddie was silent and thoughtful while Ria dressed him, but, when he was sitting in the chair for her to button his boots, he said suddenly, "Oh, I know! when I say 'Our Father,' I'll ask him to tell me where to find Jesus."

As soon as the boots were on, and he was washed and brushed, ready for breakfast, he kneeled down to say his prayers as usual.

"Our Father who art in heaven," said he, slowly and earnestly; and then

he stopped and hesitated whether he should say the whole prayer first, but he was too eager with his own special want, and he added, "please tell me where Jesus is, for I love him; and I want him to feed my soul and tell me about heaven;" then he stopped again; and then said "Amen," very solemnly, and got up from his knees, looking quite satisfied.

Ria said the prayer too, in her own heart, for she had never before felt such a want.

Freddie did not say any thing about it when he went downstairs, for he kept thinking that Jesus would come to him, in some way, without anybody's knowing it; and the thought made him very happy.

"Good morning, Sunshine," said his father, for Freddie's blue eyes had

a very bright twinkle in them, as he sat down to breakfast.

"How should you like to go into the country this afternoon, to Uncle David's, and see mamma?"

"I should like to go and bring her home."

"O papa!" said Susy, "can't we stay there a little while? I want to play with cousin Olive."

"And I want to see the rabbits," said Freddie, "and feed them with cabbage-leaves. They do eat so funny."

"Yes: we shall be there a day or two, so that you both can have your wish, and then we will bring mamma back with us."

After breakfast, the children commenced the most active preparations for their visit. Susy selected her favorite dolls, and "packed their trunk" with the utmost care and anxiety.

Freddie filled his pockets with all sorts of playthings, — a little boat, a top, a long piece of string wound up, a ball, a whistle, a pop-gun. All these he had, after many efforts, stowed away into his two little pockets; and then he began to study the subject of his bow and arrows. It was evident that his pockets would not be sufficient; and he was about to resort to the leg of his full pantaloons, when Ria persuaded him to wait until Aunt Mary came, who was to get them ready.

Freddie consented to wait, but thought it would be best, probably, for him to carry them in his hand, as his father might wish him to shoot a pigeon or two on the way. This valiant thought sustained him until Aunt Mary came, who persuaded the children to leave all their playthings at

home, as they would only be gone a few days, and would find enough there to amuse them.

Uncle David's carriage came for them soon after dinner, and they went off in high glee.

Freddie had begged so hard to have his bow and arrows on the seat beside him, that his father gave him permission; and Susy took "Madie," her "very biggest" doll, whom she had carefully cloaked, hooded, and tippeted for the occasion.

Freddie asked a great many questions about things that they saw; but, when they were fairly out of the city, he began to look quite eagerly for pigeons.

After an hour's ride, however, when they were coming nearer to his uncle's home, where his mother was, he did not think so much about the pigeons;

but, when he looked over the tops of the trees and hills, he seemed to see his mother's face, full of affectionate welcome for him. He did not say anything about it to his father and Susy; for, although it was very real to his mind's eye, he did not seem to think that they saw it too. They were busy talking while he was looking, and hardly noticed how still he was, until his father saw that he was fast asleep, with his head against the window. He gently laid him in an easy position, covering him carefully, and then he and Susy talked in very low voices, so that he should not be disturbed.

The road was quite rough from the frost; and Freddie would now and then open his eyes, and speak as if he was dreaming. When, at length, the carriage stopped before his uncle's

door, he started up, exclaiming, "Oh, yes, mamma! I'm almost come."

His mother had been looking and watching too, and she appeared at the door, as soon as the carriage stopped.

The greetings were very cordial in the hall, when the travellers were fairly in, and Freddie was very soon seated in his mamma's lap. He would not suffer any one else to take off the many warm wraps with which Aunt Mary's care had invested him.

The little cousins carried Susy off in triumph, and soon stripped her and Madie of their out-door plumage, and commenced their play in good earnest.

Freddie had waked so suddenly from his dreaming nap, that he had not made sure that any thing was real but his mother's face.

He soon recovered himself, however, and answered all his mother's questions, in his own queer way; and gave her an animated account of Lily and Ria, of Aunt Mary's visit, and how he could eat an acorn like a squirrel, and that he had been trying to feed his soul and to find out where Jesus was. Then he kissed her, and ran off to play with the children, among whom he was soon the loudest and merriest.

Freddie's mother was one of those faithful ones who desire to do their whole duty to their children.

His peculiar mind, and eager seeking for truth, had made her very watchful to find out his thoughts and try to guide them. She had thought of him more than usual during this, her short absence from home, and had herself asked Jesus to teach him.

What Freddie had said, about trying to feed his soul and to find Jesus, made her think intently, while she sat where he had left her.

Her prayer had been answered; now, what should she do next? She thought it over and over, and was so absorbed that she scarcely noticed what was passing around, until the summons to tea aroused her. Then she mentally prayed with all the desire of a hungry soul,—“O heavenly Father! teach me, that I may teach him.”

After tea, Freddie was very ready to go upstairs with his mother, and prepare to go to bed. She took him to her room, where there was a bright fire burning in the grate. While she was undressing him, he told her that he saw her in the sky, while he was looking for pigeons. “You looked,

mamma," said he, "as if you wanted to come to me, but you didn't. You kept smiling and smiling to me, and then I went to sleep. What made me see you, mamma, when you wasn't there?"

"It was because you were thinking about me, and wanting to see me; and then, perhaps, you were partly asleep and dreaming a little. It was your own thought that made a picture of me in the sky."

"Was it? why, how nice! Then, when I don't like that you are gone, I will be all think about you, and then look up into the sky, and see you all beautiful;" and Freddie, who was now robed for the night, capered about the room with his little bare feet, peeping at his mother from behind the chairs, and calling out merrily, "I spy," till she caught him, and

turned the little bare feet to the fire, while she held him in her lap.

"You could see me just as well," said she, "when you are thinking about me, if you should shut your eyes, for you see me with your thoughts. And didn't you tell me that you had been trying to find Jesus?"

"Yes, ma'am; but I only found you."

"And the way you found me is the way to find him. He has been teaching you how, in a way that you can understand."

"Why, shall I see his face in the sky?"

"You will see him with your thoughts everywhere, for he is always present to those who try to find him. He says, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.'"

"Well, I did; for I prayed about it early this morning, and I didn't tell anybody, but I have *known* about him all day."

"Pray again now," said his mother.

So Freddie kneeled down, closed his sweet eyes, and leaned his cheek against her lap.

"Our Father, dear Jesus," he said gently, "please tell me if you are here, just like my mother, and please tell me what you know, because I am a little boy and don't know any thing. Amen."

"Is that what you prayed this morning?" said his mother, as Freddie opened his eyes and looked at her.

"No, ma'am; I asked our Father to tell me where to find Jesus, because I wanted him to feed my soul and tell me about heaven."

"And why didn't you pray that to-night?"

"Oh! because I thought I would speak to Jesus, for I know him just a little."

"Do you? ah! then he has been feeding your soul to-day."

"Has he? and do you think he will tell me what I want to know?"

"Try it and see, but you mustn't forget about it yourself; and you must be a good friend to Jesus all the time, and not grieve him, because that will drive him right away from you."

"Oh! I won't hurt him, for I love him, and I like to love him too."

"Love on then, and he will tell you more than mamma or any one else can."

Freddie was lying now in his little bed, where his mother had

carefully placed him and arranged every thing for his comfort.

His bright rosy face and expressive eyes were full of love, as he kissed her good-night; and she felt when she left him, that kind angels were watching around to guard and bless him.

She felt very thankful and happy as she went downstairs, for Jesus seemed very near to her too, and more precious than ever, for he had embraced her child.

A burst of merriment greeted her when she opened the parlor-door; for Uncle David had been preparing an elephant for the amusement of the children, and it was a great success.

"Where's Freddie?" said he; "gone to bed! That's too bad. I wanted to hear some of his wise speeches about my elephant. What

did you put him to bed so early for? ”

“He was tired after his ride in the cold this afternoon. I did not know, however, that you had an elephant ready for exhibition this evening.”

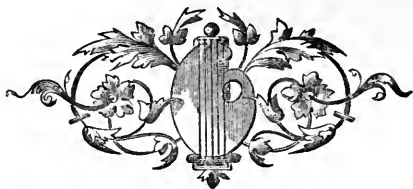
“The children were so clamorous for something to-night, that I had to resort to my elephant in self-defence. Don't you think him a good specimen? Come here, sir. I tried to have the baby make his acquaintance, the other evening, but she was so frightened, that they had to carry her off.”

“Don't you be alarmed, I beg of you; for he is under excellent training: he is coming to make your acquaintance. You see he walks pretty well. His trunk is rather stiff, to be sure; and his eyes are not very expressive. His ears are good, how-

ever; see! he will mind when I tell him to go home. Look here, sir; you may go home now."

The unwieldy individual stopped suddenly, and then turned slowly away, followed by the shouting children, who literally covered his retreat. Uncle David followed too, and mysteriously waved the children back into the parlor, while he "took the elephant home."





CHAPTER III.

UNCLE DAVID'S ELEPHANT.

THE next morning the children found, to their great joy, that the ground was covered with snow, and that the air was full of it too,—so full that they could scarcely see the river and the hills from the library window.

“O Ferd!” said little Sophie, “you will take me a coast-ride on your sled: won’t you?”

“Perhaps so, if it snows enough.”

“Oh! I guess it will snow a whole quart, before it stops.”

This brought a shout from the whole family; and Sophie laughed

louder than any of them, although she did not exactly know why.

"I think it will be a six-footer," said Bob.

"What do you think, Freddie," said Uncle David.

"Oh! I think there will be enough for the angels to play in, for it reaches up to the sky."

"What do you know about angels, my little one?"

Freddie screwed up his mouth, and shook his head very wisely, as if he knew much, but could not tell any thing.

"Oh! angels don't play with snow, Freddie," said Susy: "they don't do any thing but sing and play on harps."

"Oh, yes, they do! I know that very well," said he.

"Oh! never mind the angels," said

Bob; "you ought to have seen the elephant last night."

"Oh, yes!" said Sophie, "a *great elephant!* He walked right into the parlor, and he had gum-shoes on, and papa lent him his shawl to wear, because he said it made him look better, and he put his long nose"—

"*Nose!*" said Bob, contemptuously, "his trunk you mean."

"No: 'twas his nose; he put it right out to me, and I ranned right away."

"Afraid of a nose!" said Bob.

"Well, it was so long that I was afraid it would hit me."

"Did you know that an elephant could double up his nose, and put it in his mouth?"

"Why, no," said Sophie; "what for?"

"To eat."

"What! does he eat his nose?" and Sophie looked disgusted.

"Of course," said Bob: "it is so long, it does very well."

"O Bob, don't!" said Ferd; "look here, little Sis. That long nose, as you call it, the elephant uses to pick up his food with, and put it into his mouth, and it is called his trunk."

"But Uncle David's elephant didn't double up his trunk," said Susy.

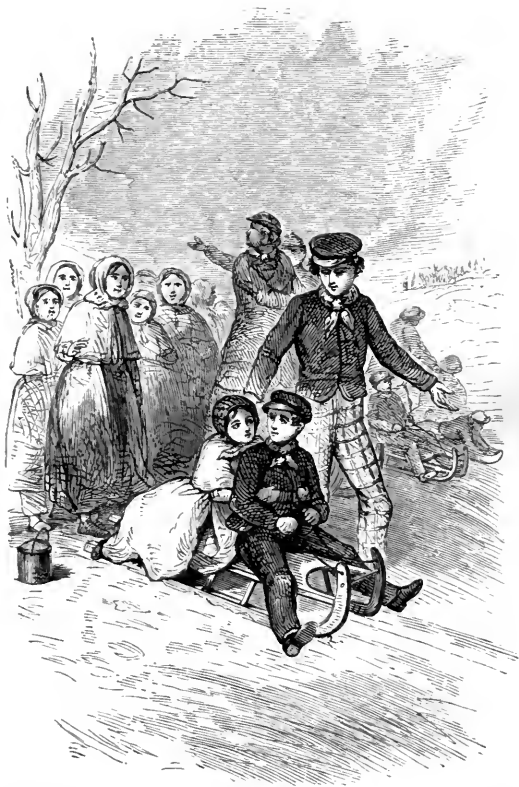
"No: I don't think he did; but that was only a make-believe trunk."

"Was it a make-believe elephant too?" said Sophie.

"I will show you all about it, the next time he comes to see us," said her kind brother.

The snow ceased falling before noon, and patches of blue sky became visible.

The children watched it all very



COASTING.

Freddie.

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faithfully; and, as soon as permission was given, they were speedily equipped, and a merry time they had, with the coasting and snowballing.

Ferd took good care that little Sophie, and Freddie too, should have their "coast-rides;" and Bob and Olive and Susy took precious good care of themselves, that they should have all they could get in every way. They built a snow man, who wasn't very tall, but who had a head that would easily roll off; and then they pelted it and rolled it off, and felt very valiant.

Freddie was a "good shot," and took the head off, as well as Bob could. This vexed Bob a little, and when Freddie's turn came, he would try to put the head on so tight that Freddie's snowball couldn't move it.

Ferd saw the trick, and did the same for Bob.

When the self-important fellow found that he could not succeed in moving the head, he suspected Ferd of doing what he had done himself, and said it wasn't fair, and that, if they wouldn't play fair, he would go into the house.

Freddie wanted to know what he meant by not playing fair; but Ferd would not say any thing about it, and Bob was ashamed to tell what he knew, so Freddie was left in blissful ignorance of any meanness connected with the play. When he went into the house soon after, and found his mother, he told her about the fun in such a merry way — his clear sweet eyes dancing with glee, and his rosy face radiant with smiles and dimples, — that she could not perceive that the least shadow of evil had crossed his path.

"Did you see any angels in the snow, Freddie?" said Uncle David.

Freddie shook his head, while the dimples played, and then said, "No, sir; but I felt some."

Sweet, heavenly influences were evidently following Freddie, and the dear Jesus was entering into the mind opened to receive him.

Most gently and naturally did he come, and Freddie was so young, that the experience did not seem new or strange to him.

He could not forget it, or do any thing to drive it away, because he loved it and was happy under its influence.

The next morning, at family worship, his mother repeated the passage, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: for every one that

asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Freddie looked up at her with an expression, in his eyes, which said, "I know what that means."

Afterwards when she had her work, and he was sitting beside her, making letters on his slate, he said, "Mamma, I like to talk to Jesus, for I think he is very good; and I believe he is listening all the time, waiting for me to talk to him, and then he keeps giving me something too, when I want it."

"What does he give you?"

"Why, something that makes me very full and happy and knowing."

"What do you ask him to give you?"

"Oh, I only ask him to tell me what he knows, and he knows so much! why, as much as there was in

the deep water that we saw last summer, when we walked on the sand, and I picked up the little white stones."

"But he does not give you more than a drop, at a time, does he? How can you tell how much there is that he does not give you?"

"Oh! that isn't the way, — not drops: he touches me with the whole of it; and that's why I like it, because there is so much and it will never stop."

"Don't you ever ask him for candy or playthings?"

"Why, no: I don't care to ask for them. I suppose he will give me those when he wants to; but I want him and what he can tell me, and that seems something like candy, — better too."

"That makes me think of what

David says, in the Psalms, 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!'"

"Why, did David talk to Jesus, and did Jesus tell him things?"

"Yes, indeed; and David wrote them down, and they are in the Bible."

"Are they? Then I'll have to learn to read."

"And there were a great many others that were taught in the same way, and they were taught a great deal, because God wanted to have them write it all down, so that it might help those who were seeking, just as you are."

"That's just like him: isn't he good?"

"Yes. David says too, 'Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.'"

"I think I should like David. I wish I could see him."

"You will find a great many good people, who, like David, can tell you of the goodness of the Lord."

"Can I? what, people that Jesus has talked to! I am glad. Are there many little children that he talks to?"

"Oh, yes! he loves little children, of all others. He says, you know, that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I know: that's one of Susy's verses. Does he talk to Susy?"

"Susy has learned his words, but I do not know whether she has heard his voice in her heart."

"I wonder if she has ever harked. I shall have to ask her. I am glad I harked. Why doesn't every one hark?"

"Because so many are listening to something else."

"Don't their souls starve, then?"

"Yes; for they do not take the bread which cometh down from heaven."

"Please, dear mamma, write 'heaven,' on my slate: I want to learn how to make it."

"And then, when you can make it, you will always know the word when you see it."

"Why, so I will, — and write 'David' and 'Jesus,' too, please. Did any little children write in the Bible?"

"You know we have talked about little Samuel, you remember the Lord called him, and he thought it was Eli; but Eli told him it was the Lord, and he must say when he called again, 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.' And

then when Samuel said that, the Lord told him many things to tell Eli. You see the Lord was ready to talk to him, as soon as he was ready to listen."

"I am sure I would listen, and I would say, '*Please* speak to me, dear Jesus,' if he would only talk to me so."

"He does not come now to speak to the ear, but he sends the Spirit into our hearts; and that takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us; and we know what he tells us, a great deal better than if we only heard a voice with our ear."

"Why?" said Freddie.

"If," said his mother, "some one should tell you that you loved me, you would not believe it, unless you felt it yourself; and, if you did feel it, you would not need to have any one tell you of it."

"No, indeed, I wouldn't! Only think, Bob told me the other day that I didn't like candy; but I knew I did."

"Supposing he should tell you that there was no Jesus Christ, should you believe him?"

"No: because I feel him, and I love him too; and I don't want to hear Bob say any such things.

"There, I have made 'heaven,' and 'Jesus,' and 'David;' now please show me how to write 'Love,' and then I will go and show it to Susy."





CHAPTER IV.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

THE next morning was clear and frosty. The meadows seemed, in the brilliant sunlight, to be covered with frosted silver. The trees sparkled with jewels, and the distant river glowed like a molten silver belt. The roads were white and hard, marked only by the delicate traces of the light sleighs that flew swiftly by, with their many merry bells.

As Freddie's father and mother were wishing to return to the city, Uncle David had ordered the sleigh, instead of the carriage, to be ready as

soon as breakfast was over; and Martin was busy at the stable with the horses, which had not been out for several days, and consequently were very gay and frisky during their morning toilet. Sparkle was particularly unmanageable. He put his ears back and looked very wicked, when Martin first went into the stable, and then tried to rush past him and get away, when he was being led out; and, as soon as he had cleared the door, his heels were in the air, and he seemed on all sides of Martin at once. He pretended to be very much frightened at every thing in the yard, and would snuff and snort, and then caper about, so that Martin had to take good care to keep away from his heels while harnessing him. Lightfoot was more quiet; but both were very glad of a chance to go, and went very

swiftly around the house to the front gate. Martin had excellent control of them, however, and made them stand quite still while they were waiting.

When the children heard that the sleigh was to be out, there was a great commotion.

"O papa!" said Olive, "let me go too; please do."

"And me wants to go with us too," said Sophie.

"Pshaw! it is too cold for girls to be out," said Bob: "they'd freeze their delicate noses. There is only room for one of us; and father had better let me go."

"Ah!" said Olive, "you'd better talk that way, Bob. Didn't I hear you telling mother, this morning, when she asked you to go to the post-office, that it was too cold, and you would freeze your ears? I suppose

boys' ears are more delicate than girls' noses."

"Oh, well! I did go, and didn't freeze my ears."

"And I shouldn't freeze my nose if I went in the sleigh," retorted Olive.

"Doesn't Jack Frost make Olive sharp, though?" said Bob.

"I should think it was you that made her sharp," said Ferd. "You must not put her on the defensive as you do, or she will be too sharp for comfort."

"I don't know why she need to defend herself," said Bob: "she ought to take what I say and be quiet."

"Is that the way you do?" said Ferd.

"No; but then I am a boy."

"What difference does that make?"

Bob couldn't tell exactly, though he

evidently thought that it did make a vast difference.

"Bob," said Freddie, "you may go in the sleigh and sit next to my mamma; for I am going to run behind and jump on to the runner, when I am tired."

"And what will you do when you are tired of hanging on?" said Bob.

"Oh! I shall call out to Martin to stop and take me up between his knees, and let me drive the horses."

"Smart boy, that!" returned Bob, "and you will be smarter if you do it."

Freddie did feel very smart, and really seemed to think that he could do any thing, as he strutted along on tiptoe, backward and forward, through the hall, taking steps, by springing, a little longer than his legs could reach.

"I'll drive you into town, in no time at all, — I will," said he.

"Oh, yes! no doubt, we shall get there before we start," laughed Bob.

"Come, Freddie," called his mother, from the top of the stairs, "come, and have on your coat: the horses are here."

Freddie sprang upstairs, in a furious hurry; for he had a notion in his head that he would have a private word with Martin, before the others were ready, about driving the horses.

He put on his cap and mittens, while his mother buttoned his coat, and was downstairs in a twinkling. He rushed past Bob, who stood at the door and tried to stop him, and out to the sleigh, which Martin had just driven in front of the gate.

He had a fall on the slippery pave-

ment, but did not mind that, nor Bob's derisive laugh behind him. He had an object in view, and meant to gain it. He had given up the idea of running behind, and thought only of driving. "Martin! Martin!" shouted he; "I want to sit up there with you and drive; please let me, Martin."

"Oh! and indade, my little mon, I should be deloighted, and the horses I am sure will go very gintle wid ye, me youthful seraph."

So saying, Martin jumped down, and put up the eager child, who had forgotten adieux and every thing else, in his intense desire.

There were some questionings when his father and mother came out; but his mother felt willing to let him try it, as she knew Martin would take good care of him.

Bob was allowed to go too, but he

felt a little discomfited at Freddie's success.

The eager horses started off in a rapid trot, and the light sleigh glided along so easily behind them, that they required strength and steadiness to keep them from running away.

Martin let Freddie hold the reins behind his strong hands; but this did not quite satisfy him. So, when the horses had worked off some of their steam, Martin would let go for a little, so that Freddie could feel the pull and drive all himself.

The horses knew the change as soon as Freddie did, and took advantage of it too, by increasing their speed. This amused Freddie so much that Martin permitted it, as far as he dared.

It happened, however, that once just as Martin let go, a mischievous

boy, who was passing, threw a snow-ball at Sparkle. He was evidently very glad of an excuse for cutting up a few capers, and immediately bounded forward in a succession of leaps, in which Lightfoot gladly joined him. Martin had seized the reins instantly, and endeavored, with all his skill and strength, to get control of the wild runaways. He soon had them in hand, when something loosened in the harness, and touched Sparkle's legs. This rendered him unmanageable, and both horses started into a full run. Now there was real danger.

"Freddie," shouted his father, "sit down on the floor and hold on to Martin's leg, until I can get at you."

Freddie did exactly as he was told, *instantly* sliding down from between Martin's knees, thus leaving him free to manage the horses.

He was entangled in the buffalo robe, and somewhat frightened; but he sat quietly on the floor, holding on as he was directed, while his father sprang for the driver's seat.

Freddie was soon safe in his father's lap, while Martin endeavored, once more, to control the excited horses.

"*Whoa, Sparkle!*" said he, steadily and calmly. "*Whoa, Lightfoot!*" This he kept repeating in steady, commanding tones.

Sparkle's ears soon showed attention to the voice, and his bounds became less violent. He yielded obedience at length to the guidance of the rein, and finally came to a full stop.

What a relief it was to them all, to know that the danger was over; for they had held their breath, in fear of being dashed to pieces.

Martin received the praise due to him, for his ready skill and coolness; and the travellers, being now not far from home, left him to care for the broken harness, and walked on, quite satisfied to be safe on their feet again.

"Well," said Bob, "that's what you call driving in no time: isn't it, Freddie?"

"We will never let Freddie drive again: will we, father?" said Susy.

"I wasn't driving," said Freddie; "the horses wouldn't let me."

"Ha, ha!" shouted Bob: "that's a joke."

"Freddie saved us from a bad accident, probably," said his father, "by his quick obedience, for every thing depended upon Martin, when I told Freddie to sit on the floor; and, if there had been the least confusion or trouble just then, I do not think Mar-

tin could have gained control as he did."

"Yes," said Susy, "if you had been up there, Bob, you would have said, 'What shall I sit on the floor for? I don't want to sit on the floor.'"

This was a home-thrust plainly, and Bob looked sullen without replying; for he knew that it was exactly what he should have said, and he was nettled, to feel that Freddie was again ahead of him.

"Sparkle minded too," said Freddie, "what Martin told him. I think he is a *splendid* horse. He didn't want to stop, I know; he liked to jump all about."

"Yes, he has confidence in Martin," said Uncle David, "and has the habit of obeying his voice. Martin trains him in that way. It was fortunate for us to-day, that he was so

trained, for the reins and bit seemed powerless for a few minutes."

"Yes: Freddie and Sparkle are both trained to obedience; and they have confidence in their teachers, and mind without knowing why; and that gives their teachers confidence in them. I would trust Freddie and Sparkle after this, more than ever before."

Freddie felt very happy in his father's approval, but happier in thinking that the dear Jesus knew all about it too; for he felt as if he had made him do it, and thus kept them all from harm.

When they reached home, they found Aunt Mary glad to welcome them; but looking surprised at their mode of coming. Her face went through all sorts of changing expressions, while they related the incidents

of the way; but finally settled into one of satisfied thankfulness, that no harm had come near them in their peril.

When Bob went home in the sleigh in the afternoon, with his father, he teased very hard to sit with Martin and drive; but Martin said that he could manage Sparkle and Lightfoot, but he was not sure about Bob. So he sat by his father, thinking why it was that Freddie beat him everywhere.

Freddie had a very spirited story to tell Ria that night, up in the nursery.

"Only think," said he, I took the reins all myself, and the horses went so fast, that the sleigh went right along in the air, and did not touch the ground at all; and the houses moved right away from us, and the people

stared at us, but we did not stop to look at them, I tell *you*. One boy took off his hat and shouted, 'hurrah!' to us; but, dear me! we didn't mind that: we had all we could do to go. Sparkle and Lightfoot held up their heads, taller than ever you saw; and their ears were just as straight as two sticks; and they jumped and jumped, till Martin told them to *whoa*."

"Why, wasn't you frightened?" said Ria.

"Frightened of what? No: I liked it; only I didn't like to get down on the floor, when papa told me to."

"What made you do it then?"

"Because he told me to: that's reason enough."

"But did you know what he wanted you to do it for?"

"Oh, no! I only minded: that's all. But I was glad I did, for he said

he was glad afterwards; and I shall always mind him, for he knows."

"You are a very good boy, I am sure," said Ria.

"Oh! that isn't much. I can't help minding: there is something in me that makes me."

"Is there? what is it?"

"Oh! I think it is Jesus. I have found him out, Ria; and he is right close to me, all the time."

"Does he tell you to mind?"

"No; but he makes me want to. He does every thing for me, and he is just as good as he can be. You had better listen in your heart, Ria, and see if you can't hear him."

"I wish I could: I should like to know how it feels."

"Oh! that's no reason, I don't think you'll hear him that way: you must want *him*."

"Must I? Well, I wish I could want him, then."

"If you had him once, you wouldn't want any thing else."

"Why, yes, I should. I am sure I should want food and clothes just the same."

"Oh! but he would give you every thing without your wanting, if you only had him: I know he would. There's mamma coming upstairs with Susy. Now, you ask her, and see if she don't say so too."

"You ask her, Freddie: I am afraid to."

"Afraid! why? But I'll ask her."

"Mamma, I told Ria that if she wanted Jesus and had him, he would give her every thing. I know he would: mamma, don't you? She says she should want food and clothes too."

"Certainly she would. I will tell you what Jesus says about it himself."

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

"Let me say the rest of that, mamma," said Susy: "I said it all perfect to Aunt Kate one morning."

"Yes: you may say all you can remember about it."

"Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"

"And why take ye thought for raiment. Consider the lilies of the

field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.

“ ‘And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

“ ‘Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“ ‘Therefore take no thought, saying What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

“ ‘(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

“ ‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.’ ”

“ You may stop there, Susy. Now,

don't you see, Ria, God is ready to care for us, if we seek him *first*; but, if we seek ourselves first, we do not find God, and we cannot take care of ourselves."

"But, if I should seek God first, shouldn't I have to eat, and dress myself?"

"Yes: he would lead you to do it, and in a better way than you can lead yourself."

Freddie was undressed now, and, after kneeling beside his mother and murmuring his evening petition, he kissed her, and clambered into his little bed. He had listened to what Susy repeated; and, when she had finished, he wanted to know where she got all that.

"Why, in the Bible, of course," said Susy. "It is in the sixth chapter of Matthew."

Freddie had not understood every word, but he had a general idea about it, that he had known it all before. He soon fell asleep, while his mother and Ria were talking.

"Freddie seems to know how to find God," said Ria; "but I don't."

"That is because he wanted to find him more than any thing else. If you seek, you will find, but you need God's help in seeking."

"Then, I suppose, he will give it to me when he is ready: I shall have to wait until then."

"If you wait, he will not give it to you; he tells you to seek, but you must seek depending on his help. You are ignorant, and must let him teach you. You are in the dark, and must let him give you light. You are wrong, and must let him make you right. But you must want to have him do all this."

"I don't see how such a little child as Freddie, who doesn't even know how to read, can know so much about it."

"It is because he is a little child, and has the true spirit of a child. He doesn't know any other way but a child's way to do any thing, and that is the right way to go to the Saviour."

"But I always thought little children didn't know enough to become Christians."

"That is a great mistake, for the Saviour himself says, '*Suffer* little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of *such* is the kingdom of heaven.' He not only thinks them the right ones to come, but says that those only who are like them, will come into the kingdom. 'Whoever therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Mamma," said Susy, "I think I am a Christian."

"Do you, darling? why?"

"Because I learn so much of the Bible. Didn't I say it perfect just now? Then I say my prayers every night and morning; and I am sure you ought to think I am a Christian."

"But learning verses and saying prayers wouldn't make you a Christian would it?"

Susy looked a little puzzled, but still felt sure that there must be some merit in what she did.

"Why, mamma," said she, "don't you think I am a better girl, than if I hadn't learned the verses so perfectly?"

"That depends upon what you learned them for. Can you remember why you wanted to learn them?"

Susy thought a moment and then

said, looking a little ashamed, "I was afraid that Olive would learn more verses than I did, so I tried very hard; and Aunt Kate said I was a very good girl, and I thought I was."

"What do you think about it now, when you consider the motive that led you to try so hard? wasn't it rather selfish?"

"Yes, perhaps it was."

"Do you think it made it any better, because Aunt Kate thought you were so very good?"

"No: I suppose not, but she didn't know why I learned so many."

"Oh, no! she could not see into your heart, and therefore could not judge truly whether your action was right or not. Now if you had learned the words of the Saviour because you wanted to have them feed your soul, or the soul of any one who might

hear you say them, don't you see that it would have been a very different action, in your own sight and in the sight of God?"

"It would have been good then."

"It would have been right. I am afraid you think too much of good actions. Our goodness is not much in what we do, for God looks into the heart. You must look at yourself in that way: then you will know what God thinks of you. Now kneel, dear, and say your evening prayer before I leave you; and pray God to teach you about yourself, so that you may judge rightly, and may always seek to do his will."





CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT PICTURE.

ONE morning, while the family were at breakfast, a note was handed in to Mrs. Percy from Dr. Corning, who lived but a short distance from them. It contained an invitation for Freddie, to go with him to see Bierstadt's great painting of a "Storm in the Rocky Mountains."

Dr. Corning was an elderly gentleman, who had been, for many years, a successful physician in the city, but had now retired from practice, and was living very quietly with a widowed daughter.

He had a kind face and a loving

heart. He loved children especially, and constantly sought their society. They always liked to be with him, and hear his talk. He had a library which contained numerous entertaining books and pictures, suited to the young people; and he knew well how to use them for the profit, as well as pleasure, of his youthful visitors.

He was particularly fond of Freddie, and often called to take him to walk or to ride; for he liked to hear his wise remarks. Being a lover of nature and the fine arts, he would take Freddie to see flowers, pictures, statuary, and other beautiful things, as he had opportunity.

At these times, he took pains to point out to him the most beautiful parts and exquisite touches; thus training the little, thoughtful, observant boy to correct judgments in these

things and filling his mind with beautiful images, among which his imagination could revel, to some purpose.

Freddie enjoyed seeing these beautiful things; but still more the interesting talk of the doctor, for he told him so much that was new to him.

He was ready, waiting and watching, when the doctor came for him; and talked very fast while they were on their way to the hall. This hall was a long narrow room, the sides of which were darkened by draperies. The picture was at one end, and the light was let in upon it from above.

When Freddie entered the room and walked towards the picture, holding tight to Dr. Corning's hand, his attention was immediately arrested by the clouds, which seemed so real as almost to alarm him.

He was so intent in his gazing,

that he was hardly conscious that his friend had lifted him to a seat, and was watching him as intently as he was watching the picture.

The clouds seemed rolling over and over, rapidly driven by the wind, and growing blacker and more threatening on one side; while on the other the sunlight was still struggling through, and lighting up the swelling masses.

Just here in the light was an eagle, sailing majestically amidst the tumult. This eagle fixed Freddie's gaze.

"What do you see, my little man?" the doctor said presently.

"Why, I am afraid the clouds will kill that bird."

"That is an eagle. He can fly through the clouds and find the sun, if he likes. Storms do not frighten him."

Freddie continued to look in silence for some minutes.

"How do you like the picture?" the doctor at length said.

"What picture?"

"Why, the picture of the clouds and the eagle;" for Freddie's attention seemed entirely fixed on them.

"That isn't a picture; that's only out-doors. Will it thunder?"

The doctor laughed as if he was amused, not at all as if he wished to make sport of Freddie on account of his mistake.

Freddie was deceived. It was, partly, on account of the size of the picture, as he had never seen one before so large; and, partly, because he was in the habit of watching clouds, and enjoying them, even when there was lightning and thunder.

His mother had often called him to see a black, stormy cloud that the wind was blowing up, and taught him to admire it. These clouds in the picture seemed so real to him that it was difficult for him to believe, even when he was told, that they were only painted. He looked very wise, when the doctor told him of his mistake, and said he was sure, though, that those clouds would thunder.

"Do you see that white peak above the clouds?" said the doctor.

"Why, isn't that a cloud too?"

"No: that is the top of Mt. Rosalie. The bottom or the base of it is far down in the valley. Do you see that stream of water and the island, where the sun is shining?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I see houses there: isn't it pretty?"

"Yes: that is the valley. The base

of the mountain is there. Now look up to the top again above the clouds."

"Why, does it go all the way up behind the clouds?"

"Yes, thousands of feet. And these cliffs, at the sides of the picture, are mountains cut in two."

"What could cut them, sir?"

"The water, probably. It collects and forms streams and rivers, which burst their way out, and wear their channels down until the mountain is divided."

"I never saw a mountain before: where did these come from?"

"Mr. Bierstadt painted these from what he saw in the Rocky Mountains, which are in the western part of the United States, not very far from the Pacific Ocean. I will show you, on the map, where they are, some time."

When they were walking home, Freddie was rather silent and thoughtful; so much so, that the doctor noticed it, and asked him what he was thinking about.

"Why, about that great mountain, sir: it makes me afraid to think about it."

"There are hundreds of mountains, larger and higher than that, in the world. They rise above the clouds, where it is so cold that their tops are covered with snow that never melts. In some places, they are ranged along for thousands of miles. There are fearful storms in them, and great winds, that roar and howl, tearing through the valleys and around the mountain sides."

"I should think God would be afraid of them himself," said Freddie.

"He holds them, as I could a pebble in my hand," said the doctor.

"It makes me afraid of God, when I think he is so big and strong."

"But when the wind is still," continued the doctor, "and the storm is gone, and the sun shines, not only on the snowy tops, but down the mountain sides and all along the valleys and streams, — then these great mountain ranges are filled with beauty and loveliness, such as can be found nowhere else. You would not be afraid of them then.

"It is true, God is very great; for he not only made the mountains and manages the storms, but he made the great world and every thing in it, and takes care of it all. He has made, too, a great many other worlds, — so many that we cannot count them. Yet he will come and listen to a little

child like you, and talk very sweetly and affectionately to you, when you listen to him."

"Oh, yes! I know that. Jesus talks to me, and I know he is big, like the ocean; but I never thought of being afraid of him. I like Jesus, but God seems too far off."

"Yes; and that is the reason Jesus came into the world and became a man, so as to bring God near to us, that he might forgive us and draw us back to him."

"Well, I wish that Jesus was God; I don't want to think of any other God."

"And you need not, for he is God; if not, he could be but little to you or any one else."

"I think he is the part of God that is next to me."

"Yes: God was so far off from us, that Jesus came; like the sunshine,

bringing light and life, and showing us the goodness of God, which but for this light, we could never have known. Then the Spirit comes, like the wind, — which we can feel, but cannot see, — and moves upon our hearts, and opens them to the light and life which feeds and saves them.”

“What is the Spirit, sir? Did you ever feel it?”

“Yes; and so have you, if Jesus talks to you; for he does that by the Spirit. When Jesus went to heaven, he sent the Spirit to stay with those who love him, and he is as much God as Jesus is.”

While Freddie and the doctor were walking and talking in this way, they met Mrs. Percy.

“O mamma!” said Freddie, “such clouds as I saw in the picture! They were very *magnifical*.”

"Ah! Freddie has to make a word to express his admiration," said the doctor.

"I did not make that word, sir; I heard papa read it in the Bible."

Mrs. Percy read more in her child's face than he could express.

"I can see," said she, "that you have had a feast."

"I did not know as I should get him away from it," said the doctor; "and I don't think I have, for he has brought it away with him in his memory. I shall take him home with me for a little while, with your leave. We are going to find the Rocky Mountains."

"Certainly, he shall go," said his mamma: "I will send Ria in for him when I come back."

The doctor had a very large book in his library, full of fine maps of

all the countries and places in the world.

They spent a very pleasant half-hour, in finding not only the Rocky Mountain range, but other ranges and high mountains, in different parts of the world.

Freddie gained some new ideas, in this way, about the world and what it contains; and he could not help feeling how very small he was amidst all this greatness.

"I do wonder," said he, "how Jesus ever found me out: I am so little."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "that shows how great he is. Nothing is too large or too small for his knowledge. If we love him, we are a part of him; and he shows himself to us, and we gradually come to have some of his greatness and goodness."

"The dear little ones that, in their ignorance and weakness, love and trust him, are sure of his watch and care. Such, he says himself, are the *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven."

"Do you suppose he thinks I am great?" asked Freddie.

"Yes: the smaller you seem to yourself and the most unworthy his notice, the greater and more important you are to him, and then you become great and good through him."

"Then I think I won't be afraid, because I am little, any more."

"There is a voice asking for you," said the doctor. "So, my little great one, good-by."





CHAPTER VI.

THE PLATE OF CANDY.

THE winter passed rapidly away at the Percys', for they were a happy family. Love was the rule of their lives, and played like the sunshine around them. A home, such as theirs, was indeed a heaven upon earth.

Freddie, with love in his heart and love all about him, grew very rapidly in the knowledge which is too often shut out from little children's experiences by the mistakes and unbelief of those around them.

The selfishness of his natural heart would strive occasionally for mastery ;

but he had learned so early that love was better, that these struggles were short, and had less and less power over him.

After the snow was gone, and the frost was beginning to break up the ground in the country, so that Bob and Olive could not enjoy their outdoor sports, Mrs. Percy sent for them to make a visit in the city. Freddie and Susy were delighted to have their cousins with them, and merry times they had with their various sports. Bob, although three years older than Freddie, had learned to respect him; for he felt his superiority. Still he had a lurking jealousy, which manifested itself occasionally, in some unkind remark or sly trick, which were very provoking. These sometimes Freddie did not notice at all, for he was above them; and his kind and

noble feelings would often shame Bob into good nature. But, occasionally, he would be so stung with the injustice of the treatment, that he would go away and hide himself, and cry as if his heart would break.

Bob took very good care to be particularly kind and noble before his aunt, so that she did not discover the trouble until she noticed one day that Freddie had been crying. He had come up into her room, and taken a seat he often occupied by her side while she was reading or sewing. His silence attracted her attention, and then she saw the trouble in his face.

"Why, my darling, what is the matter?" said she.

"Bob hates me, I think," said he; "and it makes my side ache and makes me cry."

"What makes you think so?" said she, taking him into her lap, and placing her soothing hand on his brow.

"Oh, he plagues me so!" sobbed Freddie: "I don't know why either. He kept doing it and doing it, and I did not think about it much at first; but it hurts me now, and I had rather stay with you, mamma. I don't want to play with him."

The fountains of Freddie's grief were fairly opened now, and he sobbed violently in his mother's arms.

She did not say any thing for a few minutes, but tried to soothe him with soft kisses and gentle words of love. She knew his ardent temperament, and that smiles would soon follow the sobs.

She told him a funny story of a little boy who made believe cry, and,

when his mamma and brothers and sisters all came around him to see what was the matter, he took his hands down from his face and laughed very merrily at them all.

This had the desired effect to divert Freddie's mind, and he soon returned to his usual state of happiness. Grief was an unusual visitor to him, and could not stay long.

When he was really quieted and rested, his mother said to him, —

"I have a box of candy that I brought home last night. How should you like to carry some of it down in this pretty blue plate, and offer some to Bob, with one of your sweetest smiles?"

"What for, mamma?"

"So as to remind him of his unkindness, and make him repent and ask your forgiveness."

Freddie looked thoughtful at this, but did not say any thing for a few moments. His mother could see that there was a struggle; for he was so stung that the idea of self-defence, if not of resentment, seemed ready to gain the victory.

"I don't think I want to see Bob at all," said he.

"What, not if you could make him love you!"

"But I think he ought to bring me candy first."

"I don't think he would do that."

"Then I don't want to see him," and Freddie began to look grieved again.

"But you would like to have him repent if he has wronged you, and you would like to forgive him and make him love you. If you could do this by carrying him the candy, it is worth a little effort: is it not?"

Freddie could not see it clearly: the sense of injustice was so strong.

"Couldn't you, mamma, go and tell him to come up here and repent to me?"

"That might make him angry, because then he would think that you had been telling me about it. You had better settle it between yourselves."

"But he'd just think I was afraid of him, if I give him candy to eat."

"Then tell him what you give it to him for."

"Well, perhaps I will ; but he'll only be sorry a little while, and then plague me again."

"Then make him repent again in the same way. Let me tell you what the Bible says about it. 'If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and, if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and, seven times in a day, turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.' ”

“Is that in the Bible?” said Freddie.
“Does Jesus say that?”

“Yes: they are the words of Jesus to those who love him. I am going downstairs a minute: you just talk to Jesus a little about it, and you will soon find out what is best to do.”

When Mrs. Percy left Freddie, she looked about for Bob; for she had a little curiosity to know whether he was happy or not. She found him looking listlessly out of the window. The marbles and other playthings were scattered about on the floor, and seemed to have no attraction.

“Bob,” said she, “where is Freddie?”

“I don't know,” said he, without

looking at her, "he went off and left me all alone. I don't care, though: I like to look out of the window."

He *did* care. She knew that very well, and so did he. She did not say any thing more, however, but left him to the stings of conscience.

She went back to her room, and found Freddie radiant.

"Oh, I know all about it now," said he. "I let Jesus tell me what he would do, if he was me. Now, give me the candy and the pretty blue plate: I'll fix it."

His mother opened the box, and took out some candy strawberries, two quarters of an orange and two of lemon, beautifully imitated in sugar, and laid them temptingly on the blue china plate, with its gold border of grapes and grape-leaves. It was a pretty sight. Freddie took it and

held it up triumphantly. As he crossed the floor, where the sunlight fell upon him, lighting up his golden curls and radiant face, his mother gazed fondly at him; and, when he had gone, she offered up a silent prayer that he might carry love and forgiveness, successfully, to the unhappy child who had committed the offence against this precious little one.

"Bob," said Freddie, as he came up to the window, carrying the plate very carefully, "I have come to tell you that you hurt me, and so I have brought some pretty candy for you, and I thought perhaps you would feel sorry to me, and make me forgive you. Won't you, Bob?"

Bob looked thunder-struck for a minute, and kept on looking out of the window. This was evidently an

unexpected turn of affairs, and he did not know how to meet it.

"Do feel sorry to me, Bob," continued Freddie: "I want to love you."

Bob had too much nobleness to resist this, and he turned towards the plate, and finally looked frankly at Freddie. His troubled face caught the beams of love and peace that were shining there for him; and, kissing his little cousin, said without the least effort, but with apparent relief, —

"I *am* sorry, Freddie; do love me."

"Oh, yes! I'll love you; and you won't hurt me any more, Bob: will you? Come now, eat some strawberry;" and Freddie held up a tempting one, to put into Bob's mouth. Bob did the same for Freddie, and then

they had a laugh over it, and were soon seated at a little stand, feeding one another with the delicious morsels.

Soon after, Susy and Olive came in. They had been taking their dolls to walk.

"What have you been eating, boys?" said Olive, when she saw the empty plate between them.

"Love," said Bob: "sweet, wasn't it, Freddie?"

Freddie laughed, and said he would go and ask his mamma for some more love, to give Olive and Susy. He went upstairs with the plate.

While he was gone, Bob told the girls that he didn't mean to plague Freddie any more, for he shouldn't dare to; and, besides, he didn't think he wanted to.

"Why," said Olive, "what has happened?"

"Oh!" said Bob, "he has got too much love in him: there is no fun in plaguing him. It only hurts me."

Freddie appeared before his mother, with the empty plate, and told her that he would like some more love to give Olive and Susy, if she pleased.

"What did Bob say to you?"

"Oh! he looked *wondered* for a minute, and then he looked glad, and said he was sorry, and then he called the candy love: wasn't that funny?"

Freddie's mother looked glad too, and willingly took out more of the pretty candy for the loving Freddie to bestow.

Olive and Susy were delighted beyond measure with the sweet loves, as they called them, that Freddie brought, and went off to play "tea" with their dolls; leaving the happy boys at their marbles.

It is easy to believe, that Bob and Freddie were firm friends after this. They had tested each other; and the little one, in his weakness, was victorious, because he had the strength of a higher power, which, as he trusted it, was made his own.





CHAPTER VII.

A TALK WITH RIA.

"FREDDIE," said Ria one day, "did Jesus ever tell you about heaven? You know you prayed about it one morning."

"I never asked him much about it, for I did not seem to care."

"Why not?" said Ria.

"Oh! I suppose I don't need it. It wouldn't be food, I guess."

"Why, don't you want to go to heaven when you die?"

"Yes: I suppose so; I want to be with Jesus; but he comes to me now, and I think that is heaven enough. Don't you think he is as good as heaven, mamma?"

"Yes," said his mamma; "it is heaven where he is."

"Then, when we die, we will go into a larger heaven: won't we?" asked Freddie.

"Yes: the longer we live with him, the larger our heaven will become, whether it be here or hereafter."

"I didn't know we could have heaven here," said Ria, "where there is so much trouble and sin."

"There can never be heaven where there is sin: that is to be overcome."

"How?" said Ria.

"By believing in Jesus and trusting him. Wherever that is done perfectly, there is no sin, and heaven has come."

"Why, that seems an easy way to get heaven."

"It is not easy, and we could never do it without help. Then, too, the

more we sin, the harder it is. That is the reason why it is easier for little children to love and trust the Saviour. Sin has less power over them."

"Mamma," said Freddie, "I am afraid of sin. Will it ever get me away from Jesus?"

"Not if you resist it. The Bible says, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'"

"Who is the devil, mamma?"

"The father of sin."

"Does he get into our hearts too?" said Freddie.

"Yes, unless Jesus is there: he never goes where Jesus is. He always tries, though, to get Jesus out; so that we have to watch for him. Jesus says, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'"

"Oh! I am afraid," said Freddie, "of that father of sin."

"You need not be afraid while you love, my dear boy; for love casteth out fear. Jesus says, 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation.' He says too, 'Hold that fast which thou hast.' He wants you to do all you can to keep him, and then he will keep you."

"But he won't come to me at all," said Ria, "because I have so much sin."

"But he came into the world, and suffered and died to save you from sin. There is a way to escape from it. He asks you to repent, and trust him, and let him love you."

"That's the way I did to Bob," said Freddie: "didn't I? I know that is the way Jesus does, because he told me how. Why, Ria, he is saying, Do repent to me, because I want to love you. Do hear him, Ria, and be sorry

to him; and then you will be happy: it is so nice to love."

"Dear child, I *am* sorry; but then I am so bad that he can never love me."

"Why, yes, he can: he is so big and strong, he can do any thing; and the weaker you are, the better he likes you. Do try it, Ria."

"But I do not feel weak. I feel strong and bad."

"But you ought to feel little and weak, and then, when you are sorry, you can get into his love. If you would only once get in there, you would never want to come out, and you wouldn't feel bad any more. I think it is a great deal better to be little, to get in; and then grow large and strong, so that it will be hard to get out when that old father of sin comes."

"Sin cannot reach you, if you are strong in the Saviour's love," said his mamma. "But all must be little ones when they come to him. Do you remember, Ria, what Freddie's prayer was that morning?"

"Yes, ma'am: he prayed that he might know where to find Jesus, for he wanted him to feed his soul and tell him about heaven."

"Do you think your prayer has been answered, Freddie?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am! I found Jesus, and he feeds my soul all the time."

"And if the presence of Jesus is heaven, then you are learning all the time about that."

"Why, yes, so I am!"

"The Bible tells us about 'the holy city that cometh down from God out of heaven.' In one place, it is called 'the new Jerusalem;' and, in another,

'the Lord is there.' This means the presence of Christ in the hearts of those who love him; and it will keep coming until it fills the whole earth."

"Then heaven comes down to earth," said Ria.

"God comes through Christ, and dwells with men. 'And he will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' This is heaven."

"But I thought all that would come at the end of the world," said Ria.

"It is coming all the time to those who open their hearts to receive it. There is nothing but sin between us and heaven."

"But we shall have to be sick and die," said Ria.

"Yes; but the sting of suffering and death is sin; and Christ has taken that away for those who love him. His presence is sufficient for all things, even to raise us above the effects of our own sin, if we repent of it."

"Mamma," said Freddie, "do we go to heaven as soon as we love Jesus?"

"Heaven comes to us through him."

"How good he is, mamma! He comes to us, and feeds our souls, and gives us heaven too!"

Statement



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